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7 August 1956

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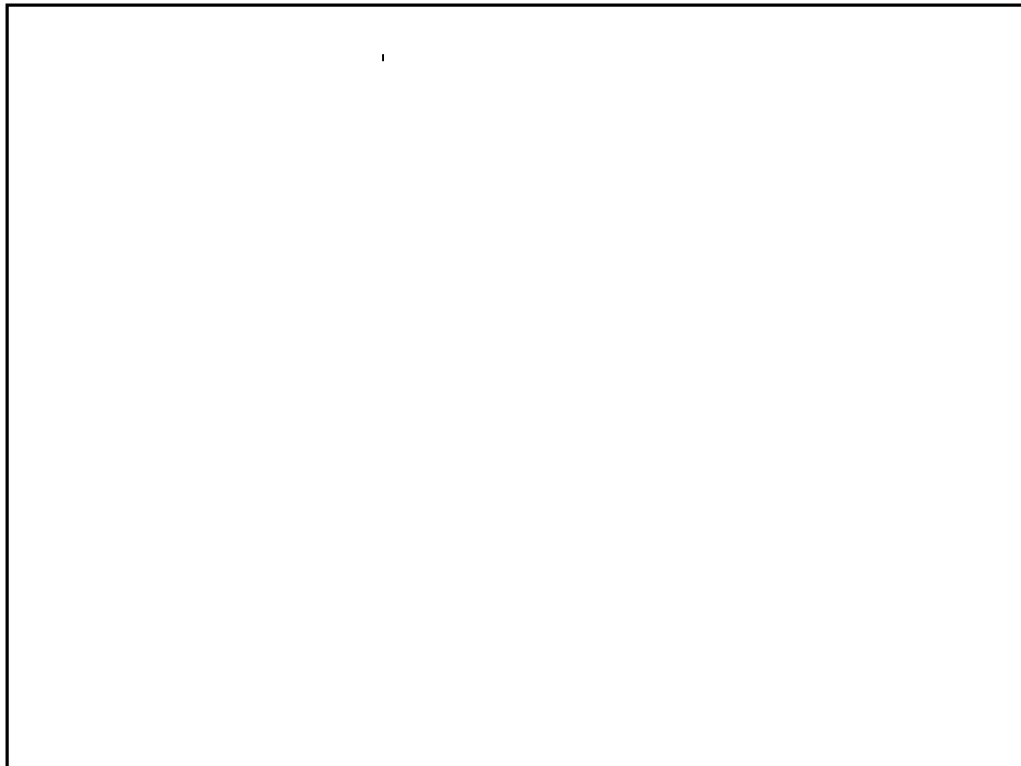
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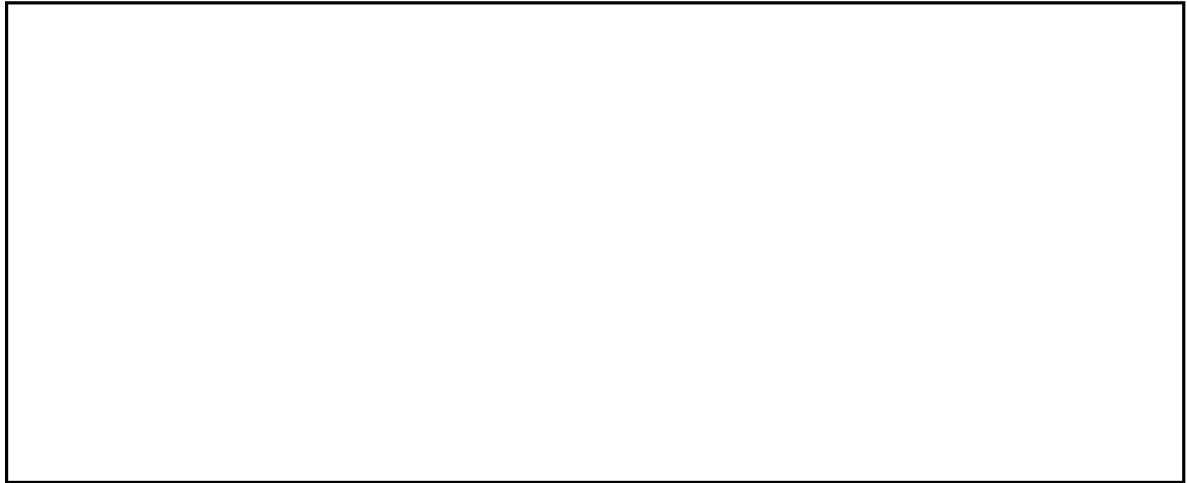
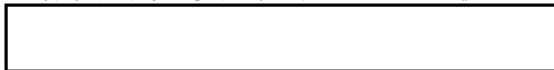
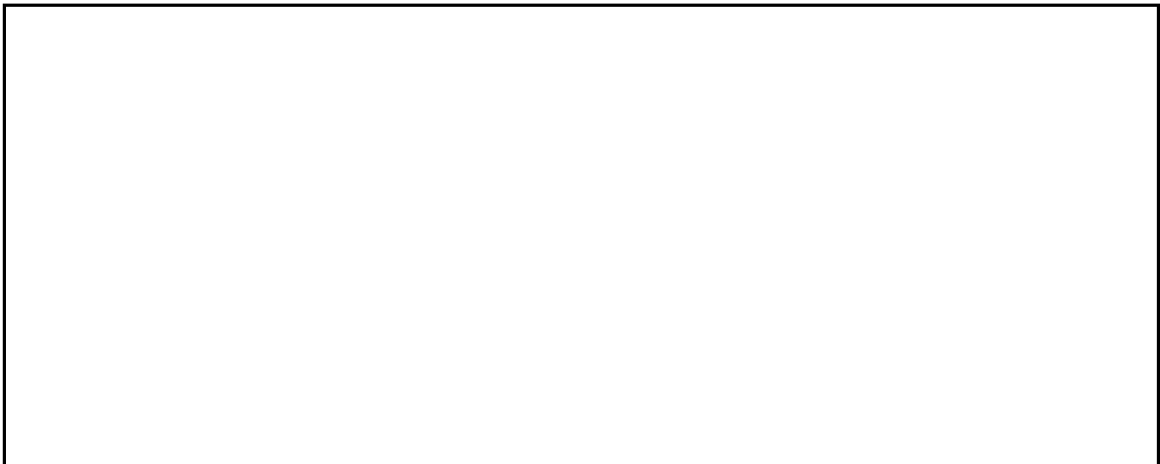
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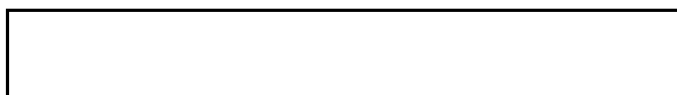
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4. BRITAIN TO WITHDRAW SOME NATO-COMMITTED FORCES FOR MIDDLE EAST

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[REDACTED] In view of the situation in the Middle East, Britain plans to withdraw "certain individuals and units" from its NATO-committed forces in Britain and Germany. In a statement to a restricted session of the North Atlantic Council on 3 August, Britain's NATO representative said that as many as possible of the forces required would be taken from Britain so that only absolutely essential units need come from Germany. He also said Britain intends to restore its NATO position to the extent required by the forthcoming reappraisal of defense requirements, as soon as circumstances in the Middle East permit.

Comment The qualified statement on restoring the withdrawn units leaves the door open for a permanent reduction of British forces in Germany.

The units to be withdrawn may be used to fill the gaps in Britain's Strategic Reserve, consisting of the First and Third Infantry Divisions, which is considerably under authorized strength.

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[REDACTED]

5. LAOTIAN GOVERNMENT-PATHET LAO NEGOTIATIONS

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Representatives of the Laotian government and the Pathet Lao, meeting in Vientiane, issued a joint communiqué on 5 August endorsing a policy of "peace, neutrality and peaceful coexistence" for Laos. Both sides have agreed to a cease-fire, and the working out of political and military details for the restoration of

Vientiane's authority in Phong Saly and Sam Neua Provinces, as well as for the reintegration of the Pathet Lao forces into the national community, has now been handed to working committees.

Premier Souvanna Phouma, heading the government delegation, has revealed a plan to increase by approximately 50 percent the present membership of the assembly through supplementary elections in which the Pathets would be allowed to participate. As to a coalition government, Souvanna has stated that the Pathet Lao could enter the cabinet only by "duly established processes." Another government delegation member, however, does not exclude the possibility that one post may be offered to the Pathets, possibly to Souphanouvong.

It is the general opinion of Western observers in Vientiane that the present negotiations will result in an early settlement advantageous to the Communists. Souvanna's consistently conciliatory attitude toward the Pathet Lao supports this view.

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6. **INDONESIAN PRIME MINISTER REPORTED LOSING INFLUENCE**

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Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjojo appears to be losing prestige while Foreign Minister Abdulgani's influence is increasing with the National Party and with President Sukarno, according

to Ambassador Cumming in Djakarta.

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Comment

Ali's decline has accompanied Indonesia's swing toward moderation. The premier's anti-Americanism and his policy of tolerance toward Communism stand out in contrast to Sukarno's recent expressions of enthusiasm for the United States and the action of the National Party in electing its leaders from the moderate wing at the party congress in July.

The strongly nationalistic and anticolonial Abdulgani is generally friendly toward the United States.

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